

October 16, 1938

Mr. Ira D. Cardiff
Yakima, Washington

Dear Mr. Cardiff:-

I regret to say that your information about the publication of a further article from this laboratory on the spray residue problem is incorrect. We have some information on one phase of the problem which is in the developmental stage, but about which nothing is likely to be published for some months.

My own reaction to further publication on this question is that I shall be quite careful to stick very close to experimental data. Much too much has been said on both sides of this problem without adequate support of an experimental type. I have been criticized in some measure by both parties to the controversy, partly because of some of the things I have said but largely because of things I have never said. I find I shall have to be very careful not to be misquoted, and still more, not to be misunderstood. As an example of what I mean, some of your colleagues have taken the position that the attitude of the Pure Food and Drugs division of the Department of Agriculture has been unreasonable, and some attempt has been made to use our experimental data in proof of that position. I do not share this point of view about the work of the Pure Food and Drugs group, and moreover, I do not regard our experimental data as pertinent except in so far as it has shown that certain small quantities of lead can be cared for adequately by the normal human body. We have not determined the extent to which lead can be taken care of when it is ingested, nor is there any source of information at the moment, in my opinion, which is adequate to provide the answer to this question. It is my feeling, therefore, that the governmental agencies which are designed to protect the public health should err, if at all, on the side of safety. Consequently I do not believe it is up to them to prove the correctness of their conclusions which have been arrived at by reasonable methods, but rather do I believe that it is up to persons who disagree with them to prove that they are incorrect. In saying this

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I am not unsympathetic with the attitude of the fruit growers, nor am I unmindful of their difficulties. At the same time I am quite frank in believing that their attitude in this matter is based on a wrong principle. I feel some justification in making this statement since the data of this laboratory, and statements which I have made, have been used somewhat inaccurately to attack the principle on which the Pure Food and Drugs Bureau base their activities.

Sincerely yours,

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Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.

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